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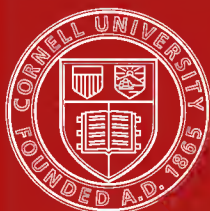
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His Majesty King George V

(Photo—Russell)

THE ROYAL FAMILY AND FARMING

GEORGE III TO GEORGE V

BY

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PREFACE

The stimulus given by Royal participation to any industry, above all to such an industry as farming, is of a kind that could be given in no other way, and I trust that the following pages may do something to show the farmers of the kingdom how great is the debt we owe to our sovereigns as patrons of, and leaders in, agricultural affairs

It would be difficult to over-estimate the value of Royal patronage to any industry; above all would it be difficult to over-estimate the advantages the Royal patronage of and participation in farming confer upon the agriculturists of the country

We see and feel the advantages of such patronage most clearly perhaps when the sale of some stud, herd or flock brings a representative from Windsor or Sandringham to the ring side to make purchases on behalf of a member of the Royal Family. The presence of such a representative at the sale

confers upon it a distinction which can be given in no other way, serving as proof that the animals to be sold are the best of their kind

Similarly a sale of stock owned by royalty is an event in the agricultural year. It is known that the Royal farms are directed by the most competent men in the kingdom, that neither skill nor expense have been spared to obtain the best results, and that the animals to be sold are the finest that care and money can produce

Agricultural England owes much to her sovereigns since the time of George III. The fact that our sovereigns themselves are practical farmers goes far to strengthen the attachment of the country to the throne; while the part taken by members of the reigning family in agriculture assures the farming interest of Royal sympathy and understanding

ELSENHAM HALL.

August, 1913

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THE ROYAL FAMILY AND FARMING

THE Royal Family of England have been closely identified with farming since the days of George III, whose popular nickname, "Farmer George," shows how his subjects appreciated the interest he took in all that related to agriculture

GEORGE III

The King's interest in farming was proved by his mastery of its details and by the time he devoted to the subject; and England was particularly fortunate to enjoy for a long period of years, when agriculture most required attention, the rule of a sovereign who made our greatest industry his principal hobby

Before attempting to trace this monarch's personal work as a farmer and a patron of farming, it may be well to glance at the general conditions of agriculture in England when he came to the throne

The "common farm" system of cultivating the soil and breeding stock was then

prevalent over a great part of the country. More than half the arable land of England was cultivated by groups of farmers, who dwelt together in isolated villages, the inhabitants of each village tilling the surrounding country on a system which has now been forgotten

From Lady-day until the harvest was gathered the lands were fenced, each man in the village tilling his own strip. As soon as the crops were removed, the flocks and herds which the villagers owned in common, and which during the summer had been grazed on the waste lands round, were turned on to the fields

Under the above conditions, the members of the farming community had no opportunity to try and improve the stock, which interbred promiscuously ; nor had any individual temptation to break away from the traditional method of cropping the land

These farming villages consisted of wretched hovels ; the inhabitants were sunk in poverty, and held little communication with other villages, depending upon the jobber* for the sale of cattle, and living

* See *Farm Stock 100 Years Ago* By Sir Walter Gilbey, Bart.

almost entirely upon the produce of the land about them

The "common farm" system prevailed when George III came to the throne, and continued until the end of the eighteenth century, when the Enclosure Acts began to be passed. These Acts made an end of the system : as the "common farms" were broken up the old villages were deserted and gradually fell into decay

.. Such was the state of affairs at the time when the great pioneer agriculturists, the Duke of Bedford, Thomas Coke, afterwards Earl of Leicester, Robert Bakewell, George Culley, and others were working at the problems with which their names are identified

It will be recognised that royal endeavour to promote the improvement of agriculture conducted with the aid of such able men and under such conditions found ample scope ; and England was fortunate in having upon the throne at such a time a king whose love of farming was so strong

King George established farms at Windsor, Kew, Richmond, and Mortlake, and the operations on each farm received his personal attention : he studied the nature of various soils, learned by experiment how

the best results could be obtained from each, and, in a series of letters which he contributed to the *Annals of Agriculture* over the signature "Ralph Robinson," pointed out errors in the system of farming followed at the close of the eighteenth century .

In 1785 the Little Park at Windsor was stocked with cattle and sheep ; in 1791, a thousand acres of the Great Park, the area of lightest soil being chosen, was converted into what afterwards became known as the Norfolk Farm ; and another 400 acres of good loamy soil form the Flemish Farm

Any topic which exercised the minds of farmers engaged George III's eager attention : thus, when the relative merits of horse team and ox team for ploughing were under discussion—and the question which was the more profitable was debated for many years—the King made practical experiments on his own lands, and his teams competed with those of members of the nobility who shared his anxiety to promote the welfare of agriculture. Lord Somerville is mentioned in this connection

It was quite in keeping with the enthusiasm for experiment in cross-breeding cattle and sheep during his reign that

George III should have determined upon the step which, had he done nothing else, would earn for him the gratitude of later generations of farmers, as well as the gratitude of his own contemporaries

Some attempts had been made to introduce the Merino sheep from Spain with the view of improving the wool of our native breeds by crossing, but none had proved successful; probably because the animals, which were imported from France, were not of pure blood

Those who tried these Merinoes, notably Mr. Morris and Mr. Ellman, famous breeders of Southdowns, gave up the attempt to establish a Merino cross, finding that the progeny did not thrive on the Sussex downs

King George III was a firm believer in the merits of the Merino, and in the possibility of improving British sheep by crossing them with it; and in 1792 he procured five rams and thirty-five ewes direct from Spain. These were first kept at Windsor, but subsequently were removed to Oatlands Park, in Surrey

Few sheep-masters of the time shared the King's belief in the Merino. Sir Joseph Banks, and Arthur Young, the famous writer

on agriculture, were among those who believed in the possibilities of the breed, but the vast majority condemned it as having been already tried and proved as a failure

Thus the King had to contend not against the innate British dislike to something new, but against prejudice already formed. His perseverance in the experiment therefore showed courage and tenacity of purpose, as well as wisdom and foresight

The early difficulties which confronted the King were great. By a piece of stupidity, for which the farm manager was no doubt responsible, the shepherds in charge of the Merinoes—the “Spanish Flock” as it was called—were allowed to take, as a perquisite, the skins of lambs which died. The inevitable result was that the mortality among the lambs was very great; the number of deaths fell to a normal average after the shepherds had been forbidden to take the skins of dead lambs

The manufacturers of woollen goods proved quite as difficult to convince as the sheep-masters. When the first Merino clip was shown them, they acknowledged

the excellence of the wool, but expressed the fear that it would not, when manufactured, prove so valuable as its appearance promised, and none of them would offer a price for it

The King was not discouraged ; firmly convinced that Merino wool would preserve its quality in manufacture, he had cloth woven at his own expense, and continued to do this for a number of years, the material always proving excellent ; and still the manufacturers continued to disparage Merino wool, maintaining that it must in time lose quality

In 1796 some manufacturers, more enterprising than the rest, bought the Royal wool clip at 2s. per lb., which was a little over the market price for Southdown wool at the time ; and in the three subsequent years the clip was purchased at increasing prices

In 1799 the best of the crop brought as much as 5s. 9d. per lb., the second quality 3s. 6d., and the third 2s. 6d. Imported Spanish wool that year was dearer than it had even been, but these figures were regarded as extraordinary. Southdown wool in 1799 was bringing from 2s. to 3s. per lb.

The battle was won. The King, who had

been giving away rams and ewes to any one who would promise to use them for crossing, now ceased making these gifts. He had never been eager to give away Merinoes, holding that anyone might take what was given him for nothing ; for, as he wisely argued, if a man had to pay for ram or ewe, he would at least take some care of it

His Majesty, in 1799, ordered Merino rams and ewes to be sold at an average of five guineas for the former and two guineas for the latter ; and at such prices they found ready purchasers

In 1807 the Spanish Grand Junta presented George III with a flock of 2,000 Merinoes, the finest in Spain ; and these were steadily distributed throughout the kingdom among buyers who now were only too anxious to have them

In 1810 Arthur Young wrote Lasteyrie, a great French authority on sheep, that there were some Merinoes in almost every part of Great Britain, and that they had been successfully crossed with various English breeds

George III had accomplished the task he had set for himself ; and in wearing down the prejudice against the Merino he rendered a service to what was then one

of our greatest industries whose value it would be impossible to overstate

It was a task which only the Sovereign with the prestige and influence of his position could have carried through, and proves the enormous importance of Royal interest in agriculture

He was anxious that his sons, Prince George and the Duke of York, should acquire a taste for farming pursuits, and he appointed Arthur Young director of a farm in Kew Park which was cultivated by the two young princes. Under the King's commands they bore part in all the manual labour of the farm, ploughing, sowing, and reaping with their own hands; even making the bread themselves according to the Rev. J. Croly*

George III had a very high opinion of Arthur Young, to whose periodical, the *Annals of Agriculture*, as already said, he contributed essays from his own pen

Young was the King's constant adviser in matters connected with the Royal farms, and he records with just pride that the King once said to him; "I consider myself as more obliged to you than to any other man in my dominions"

* *Life of George III* (Published 1830)

The establishment of the old Board of Agriculture was a measure which had the King's warm support, and he gave countenance and encouragement to many of the agricultural societies which were founded during the period 1790-1810

The King cordially approved the policy of enclosing the land, as expressed in the numerous Enclosure Acts, which made an end of the "common farm" system, with all its waste and deficiencies. "The ground, like man," he said, "was never meant to be idle ; if it does not produce something useful it will be overrun with weeds"

During the last thirty years, 1791-1820, of King George III's reign upwards of $3\frac{1}{4}$ millions of acres were enclosed, and great numbers of the old farming villages disappeared

GEORGE IV

George IV took little interest in farming, in spite of the training he had received at Kew in his boyhood

He carried on the royal farms which had been established at Windsor by his father, but there is reason to doubt

whether he ever paid them more personal attention than a rare visit

The King's indifference to agricultural affairs was regrettable, inasmuch as the condition of rural England since the close of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 was at its worst

The high profits farmers were making during the wars disappeared with the restoration of peace, while the heavy taxes remained

The ranks of the unemployed were swelled by the thousands of soldiers and sailors whose services the country had ceased to need, and the distress among the poorer classes was appalling

The price of land during George IV's reign fell everywhere, and rents were proportionately reduced; troubles with labourers, agrarian outrages, bad seasons, and sheep rot aggravated the distress; in a word, English agriculture was passing through one of its worst periods

WILLIAM IV

The same condition of affairs prevailed during the seven years of William IV's reign, but in a less degree; the worst was

over, and the distress was beginning to subside during the last year or two of his brief reign

William IV took a somewhat perfunctory interest in agricultural affairs. It was hardly to be expected that a sovereign who had spent much of his life at sea, whose heart was still in his profession as a sailor, and who came to the throne at the age of sixty-five should conceive a real interest in a great and complex industry, more especially when the earlier years of his reign were marked by such political struggles as those which preceded the passing of the Reform Bill

QUEEN VICTORIA AND THE PRINCE CONSORT.

It was reserved for the Prince Consort to restore royal farming to the position it held under George III, and to renew that king's close personal interest in agriculture

The Prince's invaluable services to the industry began with his marriage to Queen Victoria in 1840, at a time when farming was beginning to recover from nearly a quarter of a century of depression and could profit by the stimulus royal interest was able to impart

English farming was still in a backward condition at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign. The labours of King George III, of the Duke of Bedford, Bakewell, and men of the great school of pioneers who had done so much to improve both stock and methods of cultivation, had not made their efforts felt among the mass of farmers

The majority followed the methods of their ancestors. They made little attempt to improve their cattle or sheep, they adhered to the old three-course rotation of crops, and though Jethro Tull's *Horse-hoeing Husbandry* had been published for over a hundred years, few farmers used drill, horse-hoe, or other labour-saving implement

The plough commonly employed was the old, cumbrous implement that required six horses or even, on heavy soil, twelve oxen to draw it. Crops were reaped with the scythe, broad hook, or sickle. It is recorded that a good man with the scythe, aided by a gatherer, a binder, a stooker, and a raker, could deal with two acres of wheat in a day's work

"In 1837," says Mr. Prothero, "a hundred farmers plodded along the Elizabethan road where one marched in the twentieth century track"

There were various reasons for this backward state of affairs; foremost, no doubt, was the innate British dislike to change; education was at a low point; and had it been otherwise there existed a general contempt for books on a subject of which the farmer believed he knew far more than any writer could teach him

At this period there were no practical object-lessons in the thirties, such as the great "sheep-shearings" at Woburn in George III's time, and agricultural shows were few and far between

The time was ripe for the inception of new methods when the Prince Consort began his beneficent work. The Royal Agricultural Society of England, projected in 1837, was established in 1838, and received its charter as "Royal" in 1840

The facts that the charter was granted, that Queen Victoria accepted the office of Patroness, and was married to the Prince Consort in the same year will be remarked. It is at least permissible to suppose that the Prince's advice was followed in giving the Society such valuable aid

The instincts of the statesman which were so strong in Prince Albert told him that he should do wisely to give rein

to the taste for farming which he possessed, and that the Throne should lead the way in our greatest industry

The Prince continued to maintain the Norfolk and Flemish farms established by George III near Windsor; and in addition to these he established, in the year of his marriage, the Shaw Farm for breeding stock and testing improvements

The Prince at a later date established the Home or Dairy Farm; and afterwards the Bagshot and Rapley Farms, which for the most part were used for feeding cattle, Galloways and West Highland beasts, which were bought annually

These several farms were peculiarly suited to the uses for which the Prince required them. The Home Farm was all pasture; the Flemish (clay) and Norfolk (lighter clay) farms were partly arable; and while Bagshot and Rapley (light poor soil) were taken in hand more as a game preserve than anything else, they were suitable enough for grazing purposes. The farms, differing in soil and situation, required different management, and afforded that scope for experimental work upon which their royal owner was bent.

As was said by an eminent agricultural

authority soon after the Prince's death, "His Royal Highness stood alone in British Agriculture, as in himself the exemplar and exponent of a greater diversity of farm practice and experience than any other single agriculturist"

The total acreage near Windsor farmed by the Prince was 2,600 acres. When Queen Victoria acquired Osborne House in the Isle of Wight, the Prince established yet other farms in the immediate vicinity—Osborne and Alverstton, which extended to about 1,800 acres, of which 700 acres were arable; and Barton—part of the Osborne estate—820 acres, of which half was permanent pasture

At a later date, about 1849, the Birkhall property of about 6,000 acres, near Balmoral, was purchased for the then Prince of Wales; Abergeldie Mains, some 14,000 acres, was taken on a forty years lease; and the Balmoral farm, about 200 acres of arable land, was established. Thus, whether at Windsor, Osborne, or Balmoral, the Prince had agricultural work to occupy him

There is ample evidence to prove the close personal interest taken by the Prince in the work carried on at all these farms.

The several managers always received from him in person instructions as to the conduct of affairs. Monthly accounts of each farm were regularly prepared and submitted to the Prince, who used to examine them closely with the manager.

He took a keen interest in the business side of farming, and found genuine pleasure in a successful sale. Thus in October, 1843, he wrote to Baron Stockmar that the price of cattle had risen again, and he had "netted a good return" from his auction.

It was the business-like fashion in which he carried on his agricultural work that did so much to commend him to the farmers of the kingdom as a practical leader in their industry.

The Scottish farms provided scope for work other than agricultural. The tenantry, when the estates came into the royal hands, were sunk in poverty, and the Prince's first care was to undertake work that should improve the standard of living and elevate their general condition.

In 1842, Prince Albert became a governor of the Royal Agricultural Society, and from 1843 he was a regular exhibitor and frequent prize winner. He was also

constant in his attendance at the Society's shows and business meetings, and his speeches at the annual dinners have been singled out as some of his happiest efforts; not only were they models of good sense and tact; his remarks invariably betrayed the intimacy with practical details which showed him to be a farmer in the literal sense of the word

The Prince clearly foresaw the results which must follow abolition of the Corn Laws. This momentous change came at a time particularly unfortunate for farmers. Agriculture was still in a backward state, but the industry was at last recovering from the period of great depression through which it had passed since the close of the Napoleonic wars, and brighter times seemed to be in store even for the majority of farmers who clung to the obsolete methods of their ancestors

It was this conservatism that the Prince had in mind when he spoke the following words of warning to an audience of agriculturists at York in July, 1845 :—

“Science and mechanical improvements have in these days changed the mere practice of cultivating the soil into an industrial pursuit requiring capital, machinery, and

industry, and skill and perseverance in the struggle of competition. This is another great change, but we must consider it a great progress, as it demands higher efforts and a higher intelligence”

Machinery was beginning to come into use upon the lands of the more progressive farmers, and the Prince fully realised the importance of encouraging the use of labour-saving implements. He devoted much attention to agricultural machinery, and had an extraordinarily keen eye for the complexities of any machine that might be placed before him

An anecdote is related which shows his wonderful grasp and acuteness of observation: in 1858, when at the Exhibition of Social Industry at Leeds, he was shown the parts of a new wool-combing machine which the exhibitors' men were about to put together; and soon after, in another room, the machine set up ready for work

The Prince studied the latter for a few moments, and then drew attention to the fact that the machine lacked a wheel or some other part. It was found that a wheel had by accident been omitted when the machine was set up for exhibition: it was an

omission which not one man in ten thousand would have noticed

It was his conviction of the importance of the part that machinery was to play in the agriculture of the future that led him to devote the attention he did to this department at the Society's shows

When at York for the Exhibition of 1848, he was in the implement yard at six o'clock in the morning, and spent two hours examining the various exhibits. He wrote to the Queen expressing his admiration for the ingenuity of the machines brought to his notice, saying that they kept "our attention on the stretch for a couple of hours"

Any promising novelty or invention in the shape of agricultural machinery arrested his attention at once, and if he saw reason to believe that it would prove useful, the maker was sure to receive commands to send it to one or another of the royal farms for practical trial

The Prince, as said on a former page, was a regular exhibitor at the shows of the Royal Agricultural Society of England. He also exhibited regularly at the Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland and the Royal Dublin Society

It was at the meeting of the latter body

in 1849 that the Prince made a speech which showed his mastery of large problems connected with agriculture, urging upon his hearers the paramount importance of seeking improvement in Irish breeding stock. He recognised that Ireland, with her drawbacks of climate, could never become a great corn-growing country, and that her hope of agricultural prosperity must lie always in her cattle

Breeding was in a very backward condition in Ireland in those days, and the Prince's keen eye for such matters showed him how great was the need of the improvement upon which he insisted in his speech

The Prince would have appreciated at its full value the good work begun in this direction by the late Mr. John Thornton twenty years afterwards *

It was said, and with perfect justice, that an account of the work done on the royal farms during the twenty years of the Prince Consort's control would be a "a history of the agricultural improvements of all the soils in England" during that period. In

* See *John Thornton : A Memoir*. By Sir Walter Gilbey, Bart. Vinton & Co., 1910.

1840. when he took them in hand, all were ill-provided with buildings, were ill-drained or undrained, the pastures were rough, and roads were wanting

The Home or Dairy Farm was in the worst condition of any : the buildings were inconvenient, where they were not ruinous, and the land was flooded when the Thames was high. In 1845-6 there were heavy losses among the cattle from pleuro-pneumonia, arising from the state of the farm

By degrees this state of affairs was altered. The necessary roads were made, extensive drainage works were undertaken, new homesteads and outbuildings were constructed. All these improvements were carried out under the personal supervision and guidance of the Prince, who displayed his usual practical spirit in dealing with plans and designs

When, in 1852, Mr. Turnbull was commissioned to produce plans for the new dairy buildings on the Home Farm, the Prince told him that, though an ornamental structure was desirable, no beauty would atone for lack of utility ; the building was to be useful first, and decorative afterwards.

His own designs were largely followed in erecting the dairy

Shorthorns and Jerseys were the principal stock kept on the Home Farm under the Prince's direction, Devons at the Norfolk, and Herefords at the Flemish farm. It may be noticed that the first animal with which Prince Albert won a prize was a Hereford ox, exhibited at the Smithfield Show in 1848

The Home Farm was probably among the first, if it were not actually the first, on which "milk records" were regularly kept in England. An accurate account of the quantities of milk obtained at each milking was kept, with particulars of the quantity of cream taken and weight of butter churned. Pigs were a feature at his farm, that the dairy offal might be used in the most profitable way

Numerous experiments were set on foot with the object of elucidating vexed questions of practical moment to farmers: thus, when the Shaw Farm was reorganised, boxes were constructed, some with open yards attached and others without, in order to ascertain whether bullocks of various breeds would fatten more readily if denied

exercise altogether or allowed some freedom of movement

Again, the Southdowns which had previously been kept on the Home and Shaw Farms suffering much from foot-rot, the Prince determined to try a change; he procured 200 Cheviot ewes and put them to a Leicester ram; with the result that he got sheep able to withstand the defects of soil which had proved so detrimental to the Southdowns

A few words about the animals on the Prince's farms will not be out of place. The Shorthorn herd on the Shaw Farm was established in 1854; the Jersey herd on the Home farm about 1858; the foundations of the Hereford and Devon herds on the Flemish farm—which, when the Prince's alterations and improvements had been finished, was considered one of the most complete homesteads in the kingdom—were laid between 1855 and 1858

Clydesdales were principally kept at Barton, where also was a small herd of Jerseys; some thirty or forty Galloways, purchased each year at Barnet Fair—a famous mart in those days—were fattened at Barton

Not the least noteworthy result of the

Prince Consort's labours was the opportunity the farms afforded great personages from foreign countries to observe the progress that was being made in the breeding of English cattle and sheep

In 1857, by which time exhibits from the royal farms were frequent prize winners at the great shows of the kingdom, the Emperor of the French paid Queen Victoria a visit at Windsor, and, among other things, inspected the farms

The Emperor was so much impressed by what he saw that he made purchases of the best Shorthorns and Southdowns procurable for the purpose of improving French stock. The Prince, by the way, had exhibited cattle in Paris two years earlier

In the Prince Consort, the farmers of the kingdom lost a great and enlightened leader and a staunch friend

After the Prince's death, in 1861, Queen Victoria carried on the work at the royal farms in the same wise and practical spirit, but of necessity she was obliged to depend more than he had done upon the managers

The success with which stock bred on the royal farms were exhibited stands to prove Prince Albert's discernment in the choice of

men and the fidelity with which first Mr. H. Tait, and afterwards Mr. William Tait, followed the principles laid down by their royal master

Queen Victoria continued her patronage of the "Royal" and other societies for the advancement of agriculture, and displayed a kindly interest in their work. The Aberdeen-Angus herd at Abergeldie Mains was established by Queen Victoria as a step towards promoting and encouraging the improvement of cattle breeding in Scotland. It was appropriate that the herd should have been established in the district which from early times had been famous for cattle rearing and known as a source of supply to drovers and dealers who catered for the markets of the south

Of necessity she delegated to the able hands of the Prince of Wales much of the public work connection with the industry implies, but when opportunity served she never failed to give proof of her interest in farming

In recognition of the fiftieth year of the Royal Agricultural Society's existence she accepted the Presidency in 1889. The show of that year was held in Windsor Park,

and was honoured by four visits by the Queen

At her command, too, a state banquet was given at St. James' Palace to commemorate the jubilee of the Society

KING EDWARD VII

Our late King made his first public appearance at an agricultural show before he was ten years old, the occasion being the "Royal" held at Windsor in 1851; and, under the wise guidance of his father, his interest in all matters pertaining to the farm was carefully fostered

The Smithfield Club Show of 1861—which some of us remember as the last held in its old quarters, the Baker Street Bazaar—was the first at which the young Prince of Wales figured as an exhibitor; but his career as a practical farmer did not really begin until the purchase of the Sandringham Estate in 1863 afforded him scope for the exercise of his own tastes

While he took a lively interest in all departments of agriculture, it was soon apparent that he found greater pleasure in stock-breeding than in the growing of crops. This may have been due in part to the nature of the soil, which is more

suitable for the barley and roots to whose cultivation the 2,000 acres were devoted, than to wheat—a circumstance which would naturally lead to the bestowal of greater attention upon stock

It was well that cattle, sheep, and horses should thus have claimed the special attention of our future King. Free trade, established in 1846, had not, in the early sixties, made its effects felt by the English wheat-grower

But those men who could look forward—and among these the Prince Consort must certainly be included—foresaw that the time would come when the enormous wheat-growing areas of the United States and Canada would be developed, and improved land and sea transport would enable those countries to pour vast quantities of corn into Britain to meet the needs of a population which was steadily increasing in numbers and also in wealth by reason of the gold discoveries in Australia and California

The far-seeing statesmen and farmers of the fifties would have foreseen that in course of time corn-growing in England must be affected by free imports of wheat, and that, as a natural consequence, the

production of beef and mutton must become of greater importance

It was well, therefore, that stock-raising should be singled out by Edward VII for special attention, and it was as a stock-breeder that he was always known in the world of agriculture

The policy adopted on the Sandringham farms was that which the Prince Consort had pursued at Windsor and Osborne—to produce the best of each breed selected, and to vie in friendly rivalry with other breeders at the leading shows

As time passed the fine tact for which King Edward was famous appeared in the selection of breeds. The Sandringham herds represented the three chief divisions of the Kingdom : Shorthorns, as the breed most characteristic of England ; the shaggy long-horned Highlander, identified with Scotland ; while Ireland was represented by Dexter-Kerries : all the best of their kind

It was not, however, with cattle that the Sandringham farms were first stocked. The flock of Southdown sheep was first established. It was founded in 1866 by purchases from three of the most famous flocks of the time, those of the Duke of Richmond, Lord Sondes, and Mr. Webb.

On these foundations the royal flock was built, and not only showyard successes stand to prove its merit. Rams and ewes have, at various times, been exported to New Zealand, Canada, and the United States

The Shorthorn herds were founded about the year 1870. At that time, I need hardly say, the antagonism between the "Booth" and the "Bates" breeders ran high, and it was impossible for one in the position of the then Prince of Wales to patronise one strain to the exclusion of the other. Accordingly, two herds were established, Bates blood being maintained at Babingley, and Booth blood at the Wolferton Farm

For many years the two strains were kept distinct, but eventually, when the relations between the Booth men and the Bates men became more cordial, the two royal herds were merged in one

Judicious purchases from the most eminent breeders of the time formed the foundation stock. Strains of Sir Charles Knightley's stock were to be found in the pedigrees of both herds. Mr. Hugh Aylmer and Mr. J. Gamble, famous Norfolk breeders, supplied bulls and cows, as also did Mr. T. Holford, Mr. J. Harris,

Mr. Booth, of Warlaby, and Mr. Willingham Fowler

Among the families represented in the Sandringham herds were Grand Duchesses, Oxfords, Barringtons, and Winsomes; representatives of the Diadem, Fleecy, and Paragon families were also to be found

As time passed the herds were strengthened by purchases from Alnwick, Brougham, Duncombe, and Warlaby; and the bulls Gael, 60855, and Red Rover, 63192, were hired from the royal farms at Windsor

A son of Gael, named Celt, 66798, bred at Sandringham, was first at the Royal Show at Leicester in 1896, and was sold for 1,000 guineas to go abroad

Among the famous bulls used at various times were Pride of Collynie, 78248, purchased from Mr. Duthie; Crystal Prince, 76221, bred by Mr. Deane Willis, and bought from Mr. G. F. King; Carlyle, 65226; and Stephanus, from Windsor

In 1896 a sale of stock was held, and an average price of £70 2s. 9d. was obtained. In 1900 the average was £69 3s. 3d.

Highland cattle were in vogue at Sandringham. King Edward was a great admirer of the breed, and by his special command West Highland steers were added to the stock at

Sandringham, where they flourish well. No regular breeding herd was kept, but beasts were bought every year in Scotland to graze the stud paddocks and marsh land

Examples of the beasts fed on the royal farms were exhibited with great success at the large fat stock shows

The Dexter Kerry herd was founded in 1887 by special command. The late Mr. James Robertson supplied the foundation stock, a bull and two heifers, and for many years past representatives of this herd have been very successful at breed and fat stock shows. King Edward also had some Jerseys, which, with Dexter cows, formed the dairy herd to supply the royal household

The Shire Horse stud, which was destined to become famous throughout the kingdom, was founded about 1881, three years after the establishment of the English Cart-horse Society, as this body was originally called

The first important purchase was the mare Jewel, by Sir Colin, half-sister to the famous Chance. Jewel, it will be remembered, was first in her class at the Royal Show at Norwich in 1886. A noted champion mare was Gloaming, from Glime, a mare bought from myself. Gloaming, and Solace,

also bred at Sandringham, were champions at the London Shire Horse Show

Among the famous sires recently used were Calwich Blend, 17226, and Premvictor, 19947. At the Shire Horse Show of 1911, a horse of his late Majesty's breeding, Hoe Forest King, 24321, was first in the class for stallions under 16 hands 2 in.

The Sandringham Shire Sales have long been events in the heavy horse breeders' year. In 1892, the average obtained was £113 8s. 6d., the highest price being 370 guineas; in 1895, the average was £119 3s. 8d., highest price 450 guineas; in 1898, the average was £224 7s. 6d., highest price 1,150 guineas, paid for the mare Seabreeze. At this sale also the yearling Victor's Queen made 600 guineas. In 1907 the average was £124, the stallion Ravenspur selling for 825 guineas

The 1898 sale of fifty-four lots was a remarkable one, four "records" to that date being established, viz., the highest average, the highest total (£12,117), and the highest prices for mares and yearlings

The Hackney Horse stud was established about 1887. It was peculiarly fitting that King Edward, residing in Norfolk, should identify himself with the breed for which

the county has been famous for centuries, and the stud of Hackneys he built up was worthy of the royal owner. The Cadet horse, Field Marshal, 2896, was a prominent sire among the sires used. The mares were rich in the blood of such horses as Lord Derby, Old Confidence, Triffit's Fireaway, and Denmark, sire of Danegelt

King Edward VII's Hackneys won their full share of honours in the showyard, and high prices were frequently obtained at the Wolferton sales, as much as 900 guineas and 1,000 guineas being paid for match pairs. £164 was the highest average made at the periodical sales held

The decision to cease breeding for public sale was received with general regret. The extensive sale of 1901 was the last held at Wolferton

Hackney blood was introduced at Birkhall near Balmoral, to improve the Highland ponies bred on that estate. Silver Standard, a grandson of Cadet, was the sire in use formerly. His place has since been taken by the Highland pony stallion Skerryvore, which won the President's medal at the Highland and Agricultural Society's Show in 1910

The King's endeavour to improve the local horse stock was undertaken in the interest of

the farmers, who were given the use of the royal stallions at a nominal fee

King Edward always took a close interest in the live stock at Sandringham, keeping himself fully informed concerning the progress of studs, herds, and flocks. When in residence he never failed to take his place at the ring-side on the occasion of a sale

The King had wide personal knowledge of the principal studs owned by his subjects, and when he did me the honour to visit Elsenham in 1893, I was impressed by the extent of his information concerning strains of Shire and Hackney blood, as I was by his quick and accurate judgment

King Edward possessed the love for a good carriage horse which was so strong in George III

It is hardly necessary to remark upon his success as an exhibitor. Success whether with horses, cattle, or sheep, as I have reason to know, always gratified him, and when he made his inspection of the exhibits at any show he would display the discrimination of a practical farmer in his comments upon the prize winners, and, it often happened, upon animals which had been passed over by the judges

The King's connection with the Royal Agricultural Society began in 1864, when he was elected a Life Governor; in 1868 he was elected President for the first time; he held the office again in 1878-9, 1885-6, 1889-90, and 1900-1. He intimated in 1879 his wish to take an active part in the Society's work, and accordingly he was elected a trustee in that year

He frequently attended the Council meetings of the Society, and often spoke. His speeches recalled those of his illustrious father in the practical knowledge he displayed and the tact with which he treated any subject about which the members of the Council might not be wholly in accord

Equally graceful was the manner in which His late Majesty invariably combined proof of his own strong personal interest in the Society's work with maintenance of the principle that he was to be regarded as the representative and spokesman of Queen Victoria

King Edward's outlook was necessarily wider than that of his royal predecessors. His lifetime covered the period which witnessed the closer drawing together of the mother-country and her colonies, and his interest in agriculture was not confined to Britain

The King kept himself informed concerning the opening up of new areas of cultivation and stock-breeding in his kingdom beyond seas, and was anxious that his colonial subjects should enjoy every advantage that England could give them in the shape of pedigree stock capable of improving the local races. Thus he regarded with particular approval export to the colonies of good stallions of any breed, bulls, and rams

Fully alive to the value of the agricultural show as an object-lesson in types at which to aim, he, in the early nineties, sent Shires from Sandringham to make the tour of autumn shows in Canada. This was a step calculated to produce larger results than that directly sought; it was eloquent of the King's thought for the welfare of his subjects in the Dominion

He was always glad to identify himself with any movement which made for the advancement of agriculture, and the close inspection he used to make of new or improved implements at each "Royal" he visited, and his remarks upon what he saw, showed how fully he appreciated the importance of the part machinery plays in farming

He was as thoughtful in small matters as he was wise in important affairs, and was always ready to do anything that would afford pleasure to his subjects. The people of Bishops Stortford do not forget his kindly action in August, 1900, when he sent a number of homer pigeons to be "tossed" at the annual flower show

Her Majesty Queen Alexandra carries on the work pursued by King Edward at Sandringham. At one time Queen Alexandra had a farm of her own, on which every animal and every bird was pure white, and in this establishment she took close personal interest

KING GEORGE V

I need hardly add that King George V follows in the footsteps of his illustrious father and grandfather. He maintains the farms at Windsor as they have been maintained since the days of the Prince Consort, and he displays the same warm interest in agriculture that gained for his predecessors the place they held in the esteem and affection of the farmers of the kingdom

Our present King's connection with the Royal Agricultural Society began in the year 1892, when he became a Life Governor;

and it was my good fortune to occupy the President's chair in 1896, when as Duke of York he accepted membership of the Council, and allowed himself to be nominated as President for the following year

His Royal Highness made a very happy and appropriate speech in answer to that of Sir John Thorold proposing him for the office, referring to the keen interest the Royal Family had always taken in the Society and its work, and recalling the fact that his father was President for the first time in 1869, when the show was held at Manchester. There might, he said, be something appropriate in the circumstance that the show of his own Presidential year would also take place in Manchester

The hopes His Royal Highness expressed for the success of that show were amply fulfilled, despite the hurricane which marred the opening day. The attendance for the week totalled no less than 217,980 persons; a record. The Duke was present and also exhibited successfully, Red Polled cattle bred on his estate at Sandringham taking first and second prizes and the Reserve for the breed championship

It befell me to propose the vote of thanks to His Royal Highness for his services as

President at the Annual Meeting, and never was vote of thanks better deserved. The Duke had been most regular in his attendance at the Council meetings, and he took a prominent part in our proceedings, displaying the close interest and business capacity that distinguished King Edward and the Prince Consort

He accepted office as a Trustee of the Society in July, 1897

As Prince of Wales, he was again President in the year 1902. Those who were present at the Annual Meeting held that year at Park Royal will not have forgotten the excellent speech he made on that occasion

The first year of his reign saw him President for the third time, His Majesty consenting to take the office which was to have been filled by his lamented father

The fact that the first public appearance of the Duke and Duchess after their marriage was at the annual sale of King Edward's Shorthorns in 1893 seemed a happy augury of the interest taken by the Heir to the Throne in our greatest industry. That augury has been richly fulfilled

King George's practical interest in farming dates from the time of his marriage in 1893

His active career as an officer of the navy having come to a close, His Royal Highness took land at Sandringham and began to acquire experience as a stock-breeder. His name was first identified with Red Polled cattle and Berkshire pigs, of either of which he possessed small but particularly choice collections, and with which he was very successful in the various showyards he honoured by his exhibits. He became Vice-President of the Smithfield Club, and it was at the Smithfield show that his animals first made their mark.

It may be observed that, as Duke of York, he was the first member of the Royal Family to pay an official visit to the show of the Highland Society, in 1894.

From 1893 to 1908 Red Polls and Berkshire pigs from his Sandringham farms were exhibited nearly every year at the Royal Smithfield, Norwich Fat Stock, and Royal Norfolk shows; and with frequent success. In 1895 his entries won first prize for Red Polls and the breed cup, while the Berkshires took the first prize, the breed cup, and the plate for the best pen at Smithfield. In the following year his Red Polls won two prizes at the Royal, held at Leicester, and three firsts and the breed cup.

at Smithfield ; the Berkshires taking two firsts at Norwich. In 1897, at the Royal, held at Manchester, his Red Polled heifers won a first and special prize, while a bull took a second. Again in 1898 these cattle won first prize and the breed cup. At Smithfield in 1899 the Duke's Red Polls won first and reserve and the breed cup

The same measure of success attended his exhibits of these cattle and Berkshires in subsequent years. He has given some valuable prizes for competition at various shows ; in 1898 he offered a challenge cup for pigs at Smithfield, and at a later date a similar challenge cup for sheep

One of his first acts after his accession to the throne was the presentation of a cup to the best winner of a King's Premium at the Islington show. This proof of interest in the breeding of light horses was particularly well timed, and was greatly appreciated by those who have at heart the interests of this class of horse. In these days, more than ever, does the industry require the countenance and encouragement of royalty, by reason of the increase in self-propelled vehicles and the consequent decline in breeding

The royal Shire horses continue to hold their own under King George's ownership,

representatives of the Sandringham stud having won many prizes at the Islington and other shows during the last three years. An interesting incident at the show of 1912 was the appearance for the first time in the ring of Calwich Blend, referred to on page 39 as one of the stallions which has done particularly good service. Calwich Blend was then fifteen years old ; he looked half his age, and was thought well to deserve the rosette awarded him

The Windsor Shorthorn herd has been remarkably successful in the show ring during His Majesty's reign ; among recent prize winners mention must be made of Windsor Belle, winner of the championship for cows and heifers at the Royal Counties, first in her class, and champion female at the Royal this year

No small share of the increasing prominence of the royal Shorthorns in the show ring is due to use of the famous bull Evander bred by King Edward in 1906. Evander's sire was Royal Chieftain, his dam Eliza 21st. Perhaps the best of the young bulls by Evander is the white Marmaduke (dam Myosotis 2nd) ; other particularly noteworthy animals are Statesman and Stanley. Proud Jubilant, by Jubilant out of Rose of Collynie is another sire to which the Windsor herd owes much

The other royal herds, the Devon, Hereford, Aberdeen-Angus, and Dexters, have also been conspicuous in the show ring, taking their full share of prizes at the Royal, Royal Counties, Highland and Agricultural, Norfolk, or the shows held in districts with which the several breeds are more especially identified, and the Fat Stock shows

The Devon two-year-old bull, Star of Windsor, was first at the Royal this year, and was also reserve champion. His Majesty's Dexters were also particularly successful at Bristol, Jack Robin taking first prize in the bull class, while Robin Hood was third; Dinah took first prize in the milk yield class, while Dusky took third; and two cows from the royal herds took seconds in their respective classes

The exhibits sent from Windsor, Sandringham, and Abergeldie to the Smithfield Show of 1911 were very successful; and it is worth mentioning that last year the cattle, sheep, and pigs sent from the royal farms to the Smithfield Show outnumbered those sent by any other exhibitor. The King paid a visit to the Hall and spent over an hour inspecting the various classes. The successes of the royal herds at Birmingham have been not less conspicuous than at Islington

The herd of Shorthorns at Sandringham has been dispersed since His Majesty came to the throne, a step dictated by the fact that the Windsor herd sufficiently upholds the interest of the sovereign in our foremost breed of cattle

The sale of animals from the Shorthorn herd, held at Windsor in October last, invited from an expert visitor the comment that "seldom, if ever, have there been so many outstanding yearlings and calves as at present," while the herd had "never contained a finer collection of well-fleshed, rich-coloured, and stylish young animals," a verdict which serves to bear out the evidence of the prize lists

The sale attracted a very large crowd, including the representatives of the leading exporters of cattle ; a sum of £4,350 3s. od. was realised for the 29 cows and heifers and seven bulls offered ; all but one animal had been bred in the herd. The highest price, 500 guineas, was obtained for the heifer Golden Clipper Rose in calf to Proud Jubilant ; other lots brought 400, 300, 280, and 250 guineas. The bulls sold less well than the cows and heifers, the demand for them being very dull

His Majesty became Patron of the Aberdeen-Angus Cattle Society in succession to his

father, who, I may remind the reader, assumed that office on the demise of Queen Victoria. The Aberdeen-Angus herd at Abergeldie is perhaps the finest in the kingdom ; the rule is to retain only the best of the bull calves produced, the less good ones being fed off as steers. A large number of fat cattle are disposed of by special sale in Aberdeen every year before Christmas

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